

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0345

OTTAWA PLEASE POUCH ALL OTHER CANADIAN CONSULATES

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SCENARIO FOR NEXT TWO YEARS IN QUEBEC

BASED ON STATEMENTS BY LEVESQUE AND OTHER P.Q. LEADERS

WE SEE A SCENARIO EVOLVING FOLLOWING GENERAL LINES

OUTLINED BELOW:

1. SOON AFTER THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CONVENES IN JANUARY, PQ GOVERNMENT WILL TABLE A LAW AUTHORIZING ITSELF TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTTAWA ON ESTABLISHING A SOVEREIGN QUEBEC. ALTHOUGH PROVINCIAL EXIGENCIES SUCH AS STRAIGHTENING OUT "FISCAL MESS" AND ESTABLISHING MORE TRUST IN PUBLIC SERVICE WILL BE HIS INITIAL PRIORITIES, LEVESQUE HAS SAID THAT HE WILL MOVE QUICKLY TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTTAWA. THIS WILL BE NECESSARY BOTH TO SATISFY HIS RADICAL WING AND TO FINISH THE NEGOTIATIONS -- WHATEVER THEIR OUTCOME -- IN TIME TO HAVE THE REFERENDUM IN FIRST 2 OR 3 YEARS OF HIS PERCEIVED FOUR YEAR MANDATE. WITH A STRONG MAJORITY, PQ GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE ABLE TO MOVE LEGISLATION THROUGH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FAIRLY EXPEDITIOUSLY. OF COURSE, REMAINING LIBERALS AND UN MAY PULL OUT EVERY PARLIAMENTARY TACTIC IN THE BOOK TO DELAY IT - IF

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IT IS DECIDED THAT ADOPTION OF SUCH A LAW SHOULD BE OCCASION

CONSTRUCT FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE FOR FEDERALISM.

2. WHEN THE LEGISLATION IS ADOPTED, PQ GOVT, AS AN OPENING GAMBIT, LIKELY ASK OTTAWA BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS ON LEADING TO INDEPENDANCE. AT THIS POINT, OTTAWA'S REACTIONS BECOME IMPORTANT. TRUDEAU HAS ALREADY SAID THAT HE WILL NOT NEGOTIATE ANY FORM OF SEPARATISM. SOME SUGGEST HE MAY ATTEMPT ACCELERATE TIMING OF REFERENDUM BY CALLING ONE HIMSELF IN QUEBEC OR BY ATTEMPTING FORCE LEVESQUE INTO DOING SO. THIS WOULD BE DONE ON ASSUMPTION QUEBEC MAJORITY WOULD VOTE AGAINST INDEPENDENCE AT THIS TIME. OBVIOUSLY, FOR AS LONG AS HE IS PRIME MINISTER, ANY MANOEUVRING WILL BE FIERCE AND ANY NEGOTIATIONS LIKELY BE HELD IN HOSTILE ATMOSPHERE. SHOULD PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES TAKE POWER, THEIR DECENTRALIZATION PLATFORM SHOULD MAKE THE INITIAL NEGOTIATIONS A BIT MORE AMIABLE AND PERHAPS EVEN SUCCESSFUL. IN FACT, LISTENING TO CLAUDE WAGNER AND JOE CLARK, IT DOES NOT SEEM IMPOSSIBLE THAT SOME SORT OF A FACE-SAVING COMPROMISE ACCORDING SPECIAL STATUS FOR QUEBEC COULD BE FOUND WHICH LEVESQUE COULD CALL SOVEREIGNTY AND CLARK COULD CALL CANADA. LIBERAL ANGLOPHONE REPLACEMENT FOR TRUDEAU SUCH AS TURNER MIGHT ALSO BE MORE FLEXIBLE THAN PM LIKELY BE.

3. WHATEVER THE INTIAL FEDERAL REACTION IS, THERE ARE LARGE NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL ISSUES WHICH COULD ALLOW FOR NEGOTATIONS OVER INDEPENDENCE ONE STEP AT A TIME. ALTERNATIVELY, SAME ISSUES COULD BE BRANDISHED BY PQ AS FEDERAL CHAINS ENSLAVING QUEBEC SHOULD NEGOTIATIONS FAIL. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES (OR PERHAPS ALL CIRCUMSTANCES) GOQ WILL SEIZE EVERY IRON TO STROKE FIRE AND HAVE PUBLIC OPINION AT BOILING POINT BEFORE REFERNDUM IS SCHEDULED. NEXT MONTH'S CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE CALLED BY PM TRUDEAU MAY PROVIDE MORE DETAILED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS OF STATE OF FED-PROV. RELATIONS, ITS CLIMATE, AND ITS POSSIBLE USE IN REFERENDUM STRATEGY (OR IF REPORTS FROM OTTAWA ARE CORRECT, WE COULD BE TALKING ABOUT REFERENDUM STRATEGIES). OUTSTANDING ISSUES INCLUDE AIR CONTROLLERS, LANGUAGE OF AIR CONTROL, CABLE TV, COMMUNICATIONS IN GENERAL, IMMIGRATION, OLYMPIC FINANCING, CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TAXING POWERS, AND A WHOLE HOST OF OTHERS WHICH ONE CANNOT YET FORESEE. GOQ WILL SURELY EXPAND EXISTING QUEBEC DEMANDS. TO CONFIDENTIAL

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TAKE JUST ONE AREA, AIR CONTROL, AS EXAMPLE, MANY EXPERTS NOW EXPECT THAT GOQ WILL GIVE MUCH MORE BACKING TO GENS DE L'AIR THAN OUTGOING GOVERNMENT DID. BUT EXPERTS ALSO THINK QUEBEC WILL DEMAND THAT CONTROLLERS STATIONED IN PROVINCE - AND GENERALLY FRANCOPHONE ORIGIN - TAKE OVER CONTROL OF VAST AREAS OF QUEBEC SKY NOW CONTROLLED FROM ONTARIO AND MARITIMES. IN ADDITION TO SATISFYING LINGUISTIC PRIDE, THIS WILL ALSO HELP TRAIN NEW CONTROLLERS FOR WHAT MAY BE AN INDEPENDENT QUEBEC.

AS SUCH SHORTCOMINGS IN QUEBECOIS CAPACITY TO "RUN A COUNTRY" APPEAR, THE GOQ WILL CERTAINLY TAKE ACTION - OR MAKE DEMANDS THAT OTTAWA TAKE ACTION - TO FILL PERCEIVED GAPS IN ABILITY TO FUNCTION FULLY AS AN INDEPENDANT NATION EVEN THOUGH QUEBECOIS MAY TRY TO INCLUDE MANY TECHNICAL INTERPROVINCIAL SERVICES IN COMMON SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH IT WILL ATTEMPT WORK OUT WITH REMAINDER OF CANADA.

4. WHEN THE LONG AND TEDIOUS NEGOTIATIONS ARE FINISHED - OR BROKEN OFF, LEVESQUE WILL GO TO THE POPULATION FOR A VERDICT IN A REFERENDUM (REALLY A PLBEISCITE AS IT WILL NOT BE BINDING ON ANY SOVEREIGN LEGISLATURES). LEVESQUE EXPECTS TO HOLD IT IN ABOUT TWO YEARS AT MIDDLE OF HIS MANDATE. PQ WILL UTILIZE CONTROL OF GOVERNMENT TO MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE TO OBTAIN SUPPORT OF A MAJORITY OF QUEBECERS. LEVESQUE HAS SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL ADOPT A LAW PROVIDING FOR THE HOLDING OF A REFERENDUM AND THAT IT WOULD CONSULT "ALL PARTIES CONCERNED" BEFORE DECIDING A WORDING OF REFERENDUM QUESTION TO BE ASKED. IT IS NOT CLEAR IF THIS WILL COME AS TIME FOR REFERENDUM APPROACHES OR WILL BE INCLUDED IN LEGISLATURE AUTHORIZING OPENING OF TALKS WITH OTTAWA. IF REFERENDUM SHOWS CLEAR MAJORITY OF PEOPLE WANT INDEPENDENCE, PQ GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY DECLARE IT UNILATERALLY-IF NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTTAWA HAVE NOT BEEN FRUITFUL. IF NEGOTIATIONS WITH OTTAWA LEAD TO MANY COMPROMISES, GOQ MIGHT USE REFERENDUM VICTORY TO ATTEMPT ONE LAST TIME NEGOTIATE INDEPENDENCE BEFORE DECLARING IT UNILATERALLY. IF NEGOTIATIONS SUCCEED IN ARRIVING AT ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION, REFERENDUM MAY BE USED RATIFY AGREEMENT. IF PEOPLE TURN DOWN INDEPENDENCE IN REFERENDUM, LEVESQUE WILL FINISH MANDATE, SEEK REELECTION, AND IF REELECTED, CONTINUE GOVERN WHILE EDUCATING QUEBECOIS ON BENEFITS OF INDEPENDENCE IN PREPARATION FOR SECOND REFERENDUM. HE HAS STATED THAT HE WILL HOLD ONLY ONE REFERENDUM IN HIS FIRST TERM - WHICH HE INTENDS CONFIDENTIAL

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TO ESTABLISH AS FOUR YEAR TERM.

5. IN BROAD OUTLINE, THIS IS DIRECTION WE SEE LEVESQUE MOVING IN AT THIS TIME. HOWEVER, TIMETABLE COULD BE ACCELERATED BY OBDURATE REFUSAL BY OTTAWA TO ANY DISCUSSIONS, BY ANGRY BACKLASH FROM ANGLOPHONE PROVINCES OR BY ANY OF MULTITUDE OF OTHER POTENTIAL ISSUES DIFFICULT TO FORESEE BUT CAPABLE OF SPARKING TINDERY SITUATION. QUITE OBVIOUSLY, TRAIN OF EVENTS HAS NOW BEEN PUT INTO MOTION WHICH MUST CHANGE PROFOUNDLY EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS IN CANADA AND, PERHAPS, MORE WIDELY IN NORTH AMERICA. WHETHER SOME FORM OF MUCH LOOSENED FEDERAL TIES CAN BE SALVAGED IS NOT CERTAIN. HOWEVER, THE PRESERVATION OF SUBSTANCE OF HIGHLY DESIRABLE LEVELS OF COOPERATION, REGARDLESS OF FORM OF PARTICULAR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, IS KEY ELEMENT OF OVERRIDING INTEREST FOR FUTURE. GIVEN VOLATILE NATURE OF ISSUES, THIS WILL

REQUIRE UNCOMMON WISDOM AND UNUSUAL FOREBEARANCE ON PART  
OF ALL CANADIAN LEADERS, QUEBECOIS AND OTHERS.  
MCNAMARA

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